

It has come to my attention that Sorenson is still criticizing TTY. TTY consists of a keyboard and electronic display and it converts typed messages into electronic tones which are sent over a standard phone line or the Internet. Communication is direct with anyone who has a similar device. TTY is much like AOL Instant Messenger, Yahoo Instant Messenger, Microsoft's MSN Messenger, etc. Instant messaging enables the deaf to communicate with deaf and hearing people.

According to the article "Texas Signs on Video Relay Service for the Deaf" (dated September 25, 2000) on DavidBaker.com, "Most people have no concept of how cumbersome TTY communication is," says Jon Hodson, Sorenson's manager of sales to Deaf markets. "The next time you call a friend, try typing everything as you say it." Hodson, who is Deaf, has for years been an outspoken advocate for video communication for the Deaf. "We use TTYs out of necessity" he says of the 36-year-old technology. "They're clumsy, they're slow--they're about as 'natural' as sending a telegram."

According to the article "Word out: New access for deaf" (dated July 14, 2004) on the Salt Lake Tribune Website, the deaf had been limited to "TTY," or text telephone devices in making calls -- a welcome, though time-consuming and often frustrating, technology that falls short of approximating real conversation.

These statements affect education in the deaf community. I respect the deaf culture. Research says, "The average deaf high school graduate reads at a fourth-grade level". Many parents of deaf children fear that their children will turn out to be one of those barely literate deaf individuals - inability to read and write. Deaf persons will have difficulty communicating with hearing people on the job.

"Instant messaging has become an important part of the broader Internet experience for a large portion of Internet users, with 36% of IM subscribers using the service daily and an additional 28% using it at least once a week," says Jonathan Brookner, director of telecommunications research for J.D. Power and Associates. "It may be particularly surprising to see the degree of penetration of instant messaging among all age groups."

I don't wish to intervene in this action but I am concerned about deaf people's English skills and learning process. American Sign Language (ASL) is a different language than English so it lacks the syntax and nuances of the English language. Today, deaf students are currently being mainstreamed in hearing schools so we would like to see more deaf adults with better English skills in the next few years. So, I would like you to ask Sorenson to stop criticizing TTY.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Let me know if there is any ambiguity or question you may have.